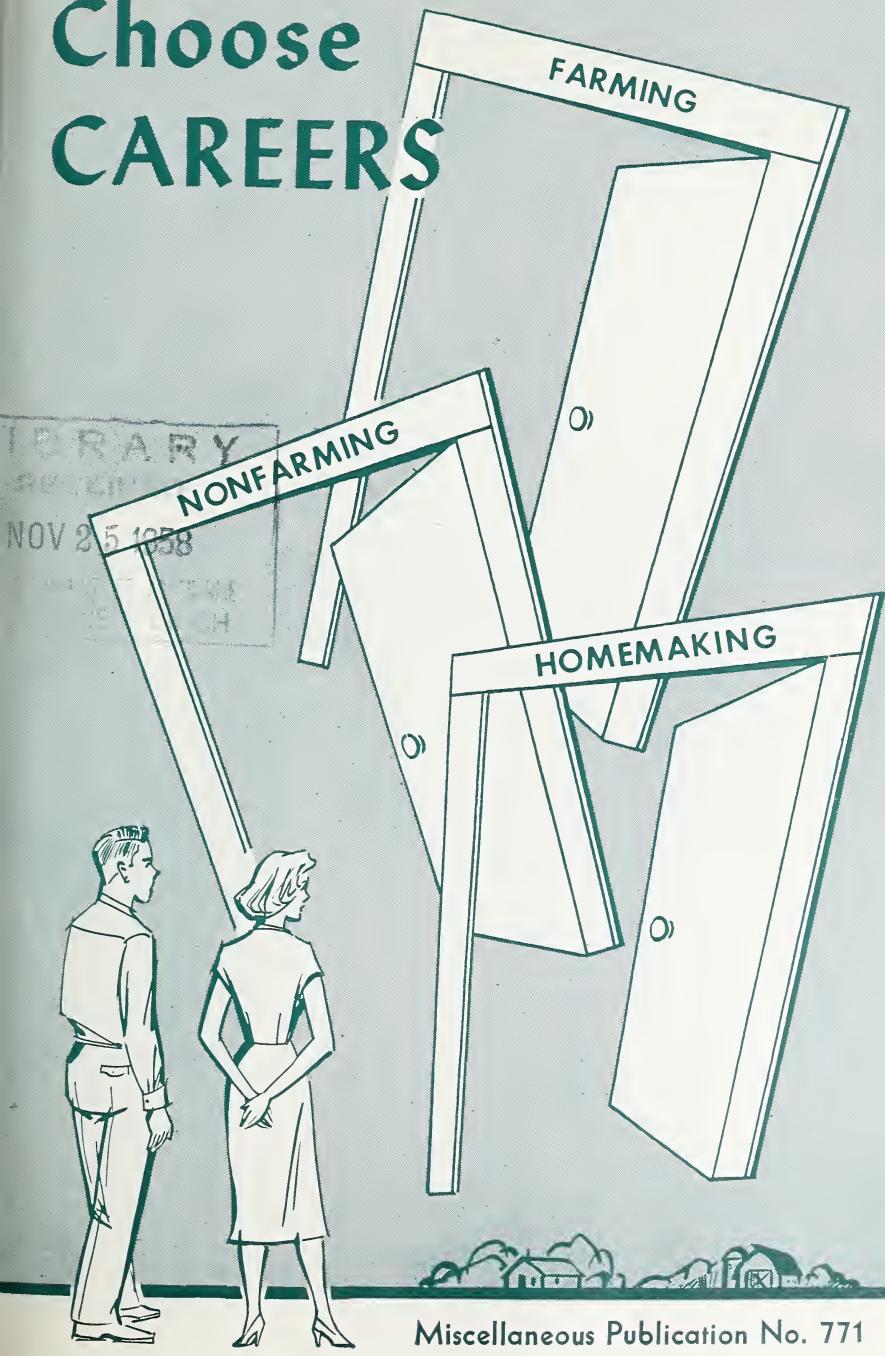


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Helping Rural Youth Choose CAREERS



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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE — Federal Extension Service

Rural boys and girls are faced with puzzling questions growing out of long continuing as well as recent social and economic trends. The effects of these trends are being acutely felt by young people in rural secondary schools as they begin to explore opportunities within the complex of changing patterns of employment. Guidance and employment counseling personnel, agricultural leaders, extension workers, school administrators, teachers, social workers, and other interested and responsible community people need to be aware of the trends in agriculture, business, and industry if they are to be able to give wise counsel to the rural young people who come to them for help. Both rural and urban communities need to consider the degree to which the services they offer are aware of the special needs of rural youth in making the transition from school to work, a process often involving a move from a rural to an urban area.

Federal and State agencies need to bring better educational, cultural, health, and social welfare services to rural youth which will prepare them for living and contributing any place in the Nation.

This leaflet points up some of the more important shifts in the employment picture with special concern for the future opportunities of young people now in rural high schools.

The Subcommittee on Transition from School to Work of the Interdepartmental Committee on Children and Youth is responsible for and cooperated with Edward V. Pope in the preparation of this publication. The subcommittee members include:

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U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

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Credit is given to the agencies represented on the subcommittee for much of the material used in the preparation of this bulletin.

Helping Rural Youth Choose Careers

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EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

The U. S. Department of Labor gives the following long-term picture of employment trends: For every 100 workers in the following fields in the labor force in 1955, we will need in 1965—

	Number of Workers
Professional and technical workers-----	137
Managers, officials, and proprietors-----	122
Clerical and sales workers-----	127
Skilled craftsmen-----	124
Semiskilled operatives-----	122
Service workers-----	113
Unskilled laborers-----	97
Farmers -----	85

THE PROBLEMS

Farming

How many of the young men and women now living on farms can be effectively absorbed in farming as an occupation?—It is estimated that the need for farmers and farm workers will decline by about 15 percent between 1955 and 1965. It is projected that less than 4 percent of the total labor force in 1975 will be farm owners and managers, and fewer than 2 percent will be farm laborers. This trend is the result of a continuing decrease in the number of farms, coupled with the growth of technology and the consequent mechanization of large segments of agriculture making possible increases in production with less labor. Concurrently, there has been an increase in the size of farms, as well as in the amount of capital investment necessary to establish and maintain a successful operation capable of meeting competition for land, capital, and other resources.

It is becoming increasingly evident that success in farming, both now and in the future, depends upon efficiency; adequate operating capital; and training in technology, economics, marketing, and business management. The operator who is poorly trained finds the competition increasingly severe.

On the basis of population data concerning births, survival rates, and number of farms available, it is estimated that 65 percent of the boys and girls now living on farms would be wise to look outside of farming for a successful career.

Considering farms with gross annual market sales of \$5,000 and over, which numbered 1.3 million, or 27 percent of the total of 4.8 million farms shown by the 1954 census, only about 10 to 15 percent of rural young

people can realistically anticipate opportunities on such farms. To take advantage of such opportunities, they must have the necessary training, skill, and financial resources.

On those farms with annual market sales of less than \$5,000, numbering 3.5 million in 1954, there may be many young people who choose to remain in agriculture either because they are unaware of the alternatives or do not have necessary training for non-agricultural occupations. Then again some of these young people may value farming as a way of life. It needs to be emphasized, however, that present trends are likely to affect adversely the chances for increasing the number of such operations.

Among the rural children who need particular help in career planning are the boys and girls in marginal income areas, and in minority groups such as agricultural migrants, Indians, Latin Americans, and Negroes.

Opportunities in Fields Related to Agriculture

Are rural young people being helped to explore opportunities in agriculturally related occupations?—In business and industry allied with agriculture there are almost unlimited opportunities for young people with farm backgrounds *and with proper training*. These industries and business concerns, coupled with farming, employ an important share of the Nation's labor force.

Job opportunities for women are increasing rapidly, and the range of training required and the pay scale varies materially. The greatest shortages exist today in home economics, nursing, medical technicians, and teaching professions. New opportunities are developing for professional women in bacteriology, chemistry, statistics, dietetics, interior decorating, occupational therapy, and social welfare. The girl who is considering college faces about the same decisions as the young man.

Farm youth who can go to college should be helped to know about the many opportunities in professional agricultural occupations:

RESEARCH:

Agricultural engineering
Byproducts
Conservation
Economics
Equipment and utilities
Food and nutrition
Housing
Marketing
New uses and methods
Processing
Production
Reclamation
Rural sociology
Textiles

INDUSTRY:

Buildings
Dairy processing
Fats and oils
Feed manufacturing

Fertilizer and lime

Food processing

Forests

Grain and seed processing

Herbicides and pesticides

Machinery and equipment

Meat and poultry packing

Public relations

Testing

Textiles and fibers

Utilities

EDUCATION:

Agricultural extension
College instruction
Elementary and secondary school teaching
Farm organizations
Government agencies
International technical aid
Vocational agriculture and home economics

BUSINESS:	CONSERVATION:
Banking and credit	Fish
Cooperative management	Forest
Custom work	Parks
Farm management	Range
Farm utilities, equipment, and supplies	Soil-water
Grading, packaging, and labeling	Turf
Land appraisal	Wildlife
Rural real estate	
Sales and marketing	
Storage and warehousing	
COMMUNICATIONS:	SERVICES:
Advertising training	Agricultural consulting
Farm reporting	Agricultural statistics
Exhibiting	Farm technology
Magazine	Food service
Market reporting	Foreign Agricultural Service
Movies	Foundations
Newspapers	Grading
Photography	Inspection
Publications	Farm organizations
Public Relations	Quality control
Radio	Regulation
Recording	Religious, cultural, health, and social welfare services for rural areas
Television	Veterinary service

The young person in a rural high school who chooses not to go to college or to become trained in either farming, an agriculturally related occupation, or a nonfarm vocation, needs to be aware of the intense competition he will face from others who have obtained such training. His prospects for employment are further limited by the *decreasing demand for unskilled labor.*

Opportunities Outside Agriculture

Do rural young people know about the opportunities outside agriculture?—Nearly 9 million new jobs have been created in nonfarm industries since 1949, according to the Department of Labor.

Many farm youth may wish to enter occupations not related to agriculture. But here again the emphasis in the future will be upon training and skill, although in many occupations a farm background will be a decided asset as it has contributed to an early orientation to work experiences and the acquisition of mechanical and homemaking skills.

Many occupations await the well-trained rural youth. Shortages continue in such fields as teaching, librarianship, social welfare, medicine, science, engineering, office work, machine shop, electronics, plumbing, carpentry, and sheet metal and foundry work, as well as in many jobs at the technical level.

Girls who plan to marry farm operators usually look for jobs close to home; those who have had training in many instances have found openings as home demonstration agents, teachers, nurses, secretaries, and medical and dental technicians. Girls who have not received special training can find many opportunities as sales clerks, and in light industries which are accessible.

It is important to recognize that farm people probably more than any other group, will be faced with the decision of moving to the job, since the majority of opportunities are located around the larger cities. This situation will be improved somewhat as industry continues to decentralize and small factories are established in rural communities.

Many jobs relating to the tourist trade could be developed locally.

Vocational Training Needed

Those unable to attend college should explore the availability of vocational training in light of the increasing demand for craftsmen, machine operatives, service personnel, and skilled workers in many fields.

Rural youth do not now have access to vocational training in high schools to the same extent as do urban youth. Moreover, large numbers of rural boys drop out of school after age 15. According to census figures for October 1957, of the rural boys enrolled in school the percentage of 16- and 17-year-olds was 19 percent less than the percentage of 14- and 15-year-olds. On the other hand, for the urban boys enrolled in school the percentage of 16- and 17-year-olds was only 12 percent less than the percentage of 14- and 15-year-olds. There is very little difference in the percentage figures for girls in the same two age groups.

Guidance and Counseling Services

Are guidance and counseling services adequate to meet the need of boys and girls in rural high schools?—Altogether the Nation's schools now employ approximately 26,000 counselors, including both full- and part-time personnel. In terms of full-time equivalents, there are approximately 11,000 counselors to serve the Nation's secondary school population. A 1951-52 study of guidance services in high schools shows that of the 6,780 counselors employed in schools half-time or more at that time, approximately 15 percent were in rural communities under 2,500 population and an additional 17 percent served in communities of 2,500 to 9,999. While the total numbers of counselors have increased sharply (283 percent) over 1951-52, it can be assumed that the trend of a majority of school counseling services being found in the larger schools still continues.

In 1956-57 staff personnel from State employment services reached 7,878 high schools, or one-third of the public and parochial high schools in the United States graduating 50 percent of the 1957 total. Most rural high schools are within the two-thirds not now being reached.

The young people receiving assistance in testing and job counseling and placement from the State employment services are, for the most part, those entering the labor market after graduation from high school. Responsibility for helping boys and girls in career exploration prior to their leaving school is shared by guidance and counseling personnel in the schools; parent teacher organizations; public and private youth serving agencies; service organizations; agricultural, business, and industrial interests; civic clubs; and, last but not least, by parents themselves.

WHAT IS BEING AND CAN BE DONE

By Government

The Department of Labor is encouraging State employment services to expand their services to small town and rural schools. One of the real problems in accomplishing this objective is the fact that 16,000 of the 24,000 high schools in the Nation have fewer than 300 students. Attempts to overcome this problem are being made by the establishing of employment counselors in larger area employment service offices to cover smaller outlying school areas. Another approach now being developed is to have employer representatives from one local office jurisdiction interview graduates from other, probably smaller jurisdictions within which local placement is not possible.

In many counties in this Nation, rural young people are being helped to explore career opportunities through organized activities of the 4-H Club program of the Cooperative Extension Service. Often these activities are carried on with the cooperation of agricultural, business, industrial, and labor groups.

Rural youth should have the same State and Federal services as do urban youth. Too often the rural young person is not aware of the services for which he may be eligible. For example, children with physical and mental handicaps are eligible for many services under State and local rehabilitation agencies. These services include counseling, testing, supplying prosthetic appliances, schooling, conducting sheltered workshops. Rural as well as urban youth need to know that such help is available to them.

The special problems pertinent to rural boys and girls in occupational choice and adjustment, to which groups like the above are giving service attention, are these:

- What should be the basic academic requirements of education in rural high schools in view of the increasing demand for professional, technical, and skilled workers in all fields, including agriculture?
- What is the proper balance between vocational agricultural and other vocational training in rural areas?
- How can adequate career counseling and job placement services be provided for boys and girls in rural high schools?
- What can be done to facilitate the adjustments of rural young people who move into urban areas in search of job opportunities?

By Communities

How can communities become better informed concerning the general manpower picture, vocational opportunities, and what they can do to help?— Community officials can get together with guidance and employment counseling personnel, agricultural leaders, extension workers, school administrators, teachers, and other interested people to—

- Get more widespread information into rural areas about services available through United States Employment Service.

- See that each small town knows where the opportunities and limitations are for migration and employment in its natural employment magnet cities.
- Help young people think through such problems as commuting long distances to city jobs and the effect of such problems on their way of life.
- Work out procedures to reach the high school "dropout" in rural areas where referral from the school to the local employment office is difficult.
- Increase guidance services to take care of the increasing teen-age population in the next 10 years.
- Broaden vocational training of farm youth to include more than vocational agriculture.
- Obtain more trained counselors in schools and in other community groups.
- Encourage youth to consider and study many fields of work before choosing one.
- Know the services of the public employment service through the local offices. These offices have testing programs in addition to information on local, area, State, and National labor markets.
- Build local libraries of publications issued by Government, private industry, and professional organizations. Obtain well-trained staff to help young people weigh and sift the information these materials contain.
- Encourage adequate financing in the States of services for rural youth.

When rural youth are unable to solve the problems facing them in the area of employment, community leaders and public and private agencies have a responsibility to help them prepare themselves for useful citizenship.

FOR FURTHER READING

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